

In Reply To:
1610 (210)

Dear Tribal Leader:

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is committed to working cooperatively with tribal governments in the development of land use plans and the completion of environmental reviews for public land uses. Our goal is not only to fulfill the government-to-government tribal consultation responsibility, but to gather useful information that could strengthen our land use plans. We have worked diligently to establish a culture of partnership in the management of public lands and resources for the greatest good for all Americans.

“Cooperating Agency” is a special status afforded to governmental entities choosing to partner with us in the development of land use plans. This status allows us to invite tribal, state, and local governments, along with other Federal agencies, to work with us by sharing their expertise so that we can formulate plans that better reflect the needs and conditions of the communities we serve. The cooperating agency role also serves as a means to facilitate coordination with our intergovernmental partners. The BLM and the Department of the Interior (DOI) are committed by regulation and policy to offer cooperating agency status to all eligible governmental partners during the planning and environmental review processes. While the Department’s policy on tribal consultation reaffirms that consultation through the government-to-government relationship is fundamental, the cooperating agency role and day-to-day coordination can also be useful, offering a less formal basis for working together.

I am pleased to announce that the BLM has updated its “how to” guide on cooperating agency relationships in a newly published *Desk Guide to Cooperating Agency Relationships and Coordination with Intergovernmental Partners*. This guide helps to shape our collaborative cooperation and coordination efforts so we can recognize common goals and achieve balanced approaches to multiple use management across public lands.

Since the *Desk Guide* was first published in 2005, the BLM has completed more than 60 land use plans and has engaged more than 300 intergovernmental partners at the tribal, Federal, state, and local levels. This new *Desk Guide* incorporates the sound advice and recommendations of our government partners and the lessons our managers and staff have learned from our experiences since 2005. It also explains the DOI’s revised regulations and policies and clarifies how cooperating agency status differs from our efforts to coordinate with partners.

I hope you find the updated *Desk Guide* helpful. Additional information is available through the BLM's cooperating agency web site: www.blm.gov/planning/cadg. Should you have questions, please contact the BLM Field Manager in your area. You may also contact Matthew Higdon, Planning and Environmental Analyst, at (202) 912-7282, or Cynthia Moses-Nedd, BLM Liaison to State and Local Government, at (202) 912-7446, in the BLM's Washington Office.

Sincerely,

/s/ Robert V. Abbey

Robert V. Abbey
Director, Bureau of Land Management

Enclosure

cc: Official – 210, Rm.503, M St

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Attachment 3-2